

# UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

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Saturday, November 23, 2024

## Not Robot Profs Yet, but...



The [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) ran an article which provocatively suggested robot professors in its title. But you didn't have to read far (or know much) to understand that we are not there yet.

What the article was really about was "courseware," a kind of prepackaged course module which replaces a fair amount of traditional student-instructor interaction and is sold by commercial publishers. Although some features may provide convenience for students, they are said not to like the absence of personal interaction.

The article also notes the potential use of "chatbots" for Q&A purposes related to a course or administrative functions, e.g., what is the requirement to enroll in course XYZ?

You can read or listen to the Brave New World of instruction at:

<https://www.chronicle.com/podcast/full-episodes-college-matters-from-the-chronicle/meet-professor-robot>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:15 AM](#) No comments:   
Labels: [miscellaneous](#)

Friday, November 22, 2024

## UC's New Approach to Labor Relations - Part 4



We have been monitoring the professionalization of the HR/labor relations function at UC which followed the 2022 student-worker strike. From the [Daily Cal](#): *Following an announcement to strike [Wednesday-Thursday of this week] by AFSCME, Local 3299, which represents UC Service and Patient Care workers, the University of California filed an unfair practice charge Nov. 9 and a complaint for injunctive relief to the Public*

*Employment Relations Board, or PERB, against AFSCME for including "essential employees" in strike efforts...*

*The university's unfair practice charge alleges that the union's call to strike was "unlawful," as the strike involves "essential employees," said J. Felix De La Torre, general counsel for PERB. "In California, public employees have the right to strike, except if you are in a position or a classification that performs essential functions," De La Torre said. "That's defined as a function that, in the absence of an employee showing up to work, there would be a significant and imminent threat to the public health and safety."*

*Along with the unfair practice charge, the university filed a complaint for injunctive relief to PERB, which is a restraining order that would prevent said "essential employees" from participating in the strike, De La Torre said. In the complaint for injunctive relief, PERB cites five medical centers across UC campuses that are "necessary for maintaining public health and safety" at UCSF, UC Davis, UC Irvine, UCLA and UC San Diego.*

*After filing for injunctive relief, the university and union met Monday to clarify the definition of an "essential employee" and agreed they will not be striking, terminating the injunctive complaint. However, the university's unfair practice charge still stands, De La Torre said...*

Full story at [https://www.dailycal.org/news/uc/uc-files-unfair-practice-charge-and-injunction-against-afscme-strike-will-continue-as-planned/article\\_eca2590a-a701-11ef-a419-537048e9d140.html](https://www.dailycal.org/news/uc/uc-files-unfair-practice-charge-and-injunction-against-afscme-strike-will-continue-as-planned/article_eca2590a-a701-11ef-a419-537048e9d140.html).

And there is this tweet from UCOP:

### The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- [Faculty File Historic Academic Freedom Unfair Labor Practice Charges Against UC](#)
- [Union Letter to UC with Benefits Demands](#)
- [We Oppose Deprofessionalizing Librarians](#)
- [We Oppose AB-1418's Inadequate Protection from the Harms of Facial Recognition Tech](#)
- [We Oppose SB-1287's Restrictions on Protected Speech](#)

### Remaking the University

- [Liner Note 9. BONFIRE OF THE KNOWLEDGES \(PART 4\): Interpretation as Counterpower - 12/31/2024](#)
- [MLA and BDS 3: Letter from Current and Former Members of the MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities to MLA Executive Director and Executive Council on Blocking the Debate - 12/30/2024](#)
- [MLA and BDS 2: Letter from former members of the MLA Executive Council to Current Executive Council on Blocking the Debate - 12/29/2024](#)

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### UC Faculty Associations

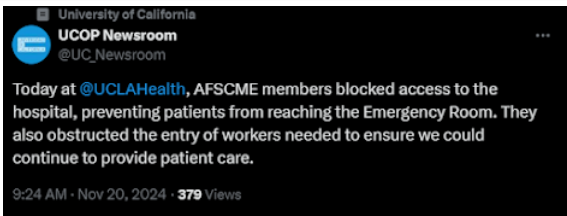
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### Other Faculty Organizations

- [American Association of University Professors](#)
- [California Faculty Association \(NEA\)](#)
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### Topics

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Source: [https://x.com/UC\\_Newsroom/status/1859286817507508436](https://x.com/UC_Newsroom/status/1859286817507508436).

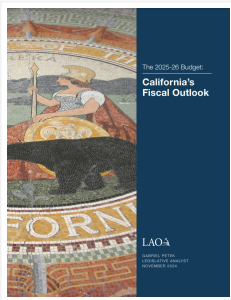
In short, UC is moving toward a more confrontational approach in its labor relations, using both litigation and PR.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:       

Labels: [health care](#), [strikes](#), [UC](#)

LAO Advises Caution

As part of the normal budget process, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) puts out a budgetary outlook publication each year at around this time.\* We can assume that the governor's Department of Finance is already drafting a proposed budget for fiscal year 2025-26 to be unveiled in early January. And, of course, ultimately it is the legislature that must pass a budget next June.



The LAO's outlook analysis can be considered a "workload budget," i.e., a budget that assumes no changes in basic policy whose outcome is determined by the underlying economy and the resulting revenues and expenditures.

We have been noting that cash receipts have run ahead of projections lately, largely due to income taxes - probably capital gains from the stock market and withholding due to "equity pay" (payment in stock) in the tech sector\*\* - and corporate profits. These sources are volatile and hard to predict. The underlying economy, we have noted, seems to be functioning as forecast, as indicated by sales tax revenue close to prediction levels.

The LAO seems to agree with this analysis. It describes the state budget this year and next (again, assuming no policy changes) as roughly balanced. As can be seen from the chart below, which we have derived from LAO estimates, there is in fact a deficit projected for this fiscal year and next which are eroding reserves connected to the General Fund.

\$ billions	2024-25	2025-26
GF Beginning of Year	\$ 15.9	\$ 13.9
Revenue & transfers	\$ 216.0	\$ 218.0
Expenditures	\$ 217.9	\$ 223.3
GF Surplus or deficit	\$ (2.0)	\$ (5.3)
GF End of Year	\$ 13.9	\$ 8.5
BSA End of Year	\$ 17.9	\$ 10.8
Surplus or deficit	\$ (4.9)	\$ (7.1)
Safety Net End of Year	\$ -	\$ -
Surplus or deficit	\$ (0.9)	\$ -
End of Year:		
GF+BSA+Safety Net	\$ 31.8	\$ 19.3
Surplus or deficit	\$ (7.8)	\$ (12.4)

We have also noted that the state is sitting on a mountain of cash. However, much of this cash is outside the general fund and its related reserves. It can be used to deal with seasonal discrepancies between revenue receipts and outflows for spending, but not for covering deficits.

The LAO's report is not detailed down to the level of UC. But we can assume that the restrictive outlook will reflect itself in whatever the UC allocation turns out to be. As blog readers will know, the Regents have already approved a tuition hike for incoming out-of-state students.

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\*The report is at <https://www.lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4939>.

\*\*<https://lao.ca.gov/LAOEconTax/Article/Detail/815>.

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Contributors

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-  [UCLA Faculty Association](#)

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: [governor](#), [LAO](#), [State Budget](#)

Thursday, November 21, 2024

## UC Health & Service Strike News



From the [Long Beach Press Telegram](#): Thousands of patient care and service workers at UCLA, UC Irvine and other University of California campuses across the state [staged] a two-day strike starting tomorrow, alleging unfair bargaining tactics, allegations the UC system denies. According to the AFSCME Local 3299 union, the strike will include roughly 37,000 UC workers "at every UC campus and medical facility across the state." The strike [began] Wednesday morning and [will] continue until midnight Thursday night...

"The University's serial lawbreaking at the bargaining table means that the epidemic of understaffing at UC facilities, and the related cost of living and housing affordability crises plaguing frontline UC workers are only getting worse," AFSCME Local 3299 President Michael Avant said in a statement. "By failing to meet its most basic legal responsibilities to the dedicated professionals who clean its facilities, serve students food, and treat its patients, UC has left workers with no choice but to exercise their legal right to strike."

The UC system issued a statement earlier this month when the strike notice was issued, saying officials "fundamentally disagree with AFSCME's claims of bad faith bargaining and characterization of unacceptable bargaining proposals." ...

Full story at <https://www.presstelegram.com/2024/11/19/thousands-of-uc-patient-care-service-workers-to-strike-wednesday-thursday/>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:35 AM No comments:

Labels: [health care](#), [strikes](#), [UC](#)

## If you're wondering how it's going...

From [Silicon Valley](#): Construction of a new student housing project on the former People's Park site is expected to continue on time and as planned, regardless of weather conditions or protests, university officials confirmed Monday.

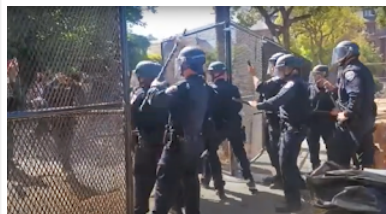
Recently laid concrete and the erection of a crane are the latest signs of forward movement on a UC Berkeley housing project on a 2.8-acre lot known as People's Park.

The site – bounded by Haste and Bowditch streets, Telegraph Avenue and Dwight Way – is expected to house more than 1,100 undergraduates and at least 100 former homeless Berkeley residents once completed at the start of the 2027-28 academic school year.

"Construction has been underway for several months now and is progressing as planned, and on schedule, largely without incident," said UC Berkeley spokesperson Kyle Gibson in an email Monday. "Like any other construction site, this site is closed to the public and trespassing is prohibited."

Gibson's comments came just days after about 20 people protested the development of the site, just the latest in a long history of activism and protest at the lot that became an unofficial park after activists took it over in the late 1960s...

Full story at <https://www.siliconvalley.com/2024/11/18/student-housing-construction-at-peoples-park-site-going-as-planned/>.



Back in the day

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: [enrollment](#), [UC-Berkeley](#)

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

## Coming Soon to a Campus Near You?

From [Inside Higher Ed](#):

### Boston U Suspends Admissions to Humanities and Social Science Ph.D. Programs

In an email obtained by Inside Higher Ed on condition of anonymity, the heads of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), in which all the affected programs are located, pointed to increased

costs associated with the union contract that graduate student workers won after their historic, nearly seven-month strike ended in October.

According to an undated post on the university's website, the programs not accepting Ph.D. students for next academic year are American and New England studies, anthropology, classical studies, English, history, history of art and architecture, linguistics, philosophy, political science, religion, Romance studies, and sociology...

In the email, Stan Sclaroff, dean of CAS, and Malika Jeffries-EL, senior associate dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, referenced the new collective bargaining agreement multiple times as the source of what they called "budgetary implications."

The deans also suggested that the larger university (which last reported an over \$3.1 billion endowment) is leaving the college largely on its own to pay the higher tab. "The provost's office has agreed to fund the increased costs this fiscal year, including students funded on external grants," the deans wrote. "Beyond this year, CAS must work within our existing budget to fund this transition in our doctoral programs."

The new grad workers' contract did give Ph.D. students a big raise: They now have a \$45,000 minimum annual stipend plus 3 percent annual raises during the three-year collective bargaining agreement. That's roughly a 70 percent increase for the lowest-paid doctoral students. The university also continues to pay for Ph.D. students' tuition.

But the BU Graduate Workers Union had sought much more in compensation, including \$17,000 more in annual stipends for Ph.D. workers. The union also wanted 7 percent annual cost-of-living adjustments or adjustments tied to the median Boston rent increase, whichever was higher.

The university continually refused these demands, leading to the longest union-authorized work stoppage among any U.S. college or university employees in at least a decade, according to the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions. (Center executive director William A. Herbert has cautioned that his organization doesn't know the length of some strikes during that period.) Last month, the union ended the strike—accepting a deal that gave it less than it desired...

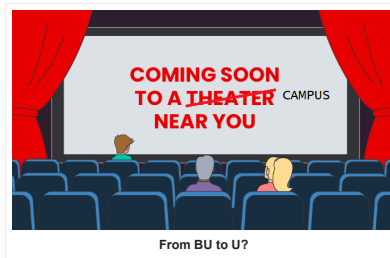
The deans wrote that the pause in admissions won't merely give the College of Arts and Sciences more time to understand the ramifications of the union contract. **They mentioned an effort, underway long before that collective bargaining agreement was signed, in which the university was exploring possibly lowering the number of students in Ph.D. programs.** They wrote that "all departments and programs contributed valuable reports on how to right-size our doctoral cohorts, considering factors such as selectivity in admissions, student success, job prospects and placements, standing and reputation of the program, etc."

Full story at <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/admissions/graduate/2024/11/19/bu-suspends-admissions-humanities-other-phd-programs>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:



Labels: Boston University, strikes



From BU to U?

## Watch the Regents Meeting of Nov. 14, 2024



We're going to jump ahead in our coverage of last week's Regents meeting to the third day, November 14 which was entirely a series of full board meetings, including closed sessions.

Public comments in the morning were heavily tilted toward Israel-Gaza, antisemitism, and free speech issues. Also included were nonunion staff salaries, undergrad health clinics including for sexual assault, the use of a nonunion contractor on

a construction project, COVID, and underrepresented student recruitment.

Grad student government comments covered federal funding in the post-election environment, and student debt. Undergrad comments were largely anti-Israel and concern about student health clinics and tuition increases for out-of-state students.

The board heard a presentation on the UC response to COVID by EVP Carrie Byington. It was noted that \$1.69 billion was received from the federal government during that period. Precautions and other steps reduced excess mortality at UC to about 17 per 100,000, about a tenth of the rate for the State of California as a whole.

In the afternoon, the board approved recommendations from the various committees. Two items were singled out for discussion. Item F5 - the UCLA cogeneration plant - was controversial because of the 30% increase in costs when the original contract had a supposed ceiling on costs. Nonetheless, it was approved with some dissent. Item F10 - the UC budget for 2025-26 - also attracted concern because of the proposed 10% tuition hike for incoming nonstate

students. But it was also approved. Note that what the budget will actually be awaits action by the state legislature next year.

Finally, the Regents took up "campus climate," code words for the protests and related issues. The board had received a report on campus antisemitism and other on Islamophobia. Most of the focus was on the antisemitism report, in part because there was regental criticism of the Islamophobia report as non-specific. Remarks concerning campus antisemitism included "insidious," "intolerable," etc., including by Chair Reily and President Drake.

Interim UCLA chancellor Hunt was asked if any UCLA student, staff member, or faculty who was the subject of a complaint had been disciplined. He responded that while there were "hundreds" of such complaints, nobody in any of these groups had (yet) been disciplined. The Regents were not happy to hear that response. The faculty rep made a defensive comment about the workings of the senate procedures. Again, the Regents were not happy.

#### UCLA Chancellor: No penalti...



Or direct to 2024 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eg84osKAXB8>.

But the most telling remark - in the opinion of yours truly - came from Regent Pérez who questioned the way the issue was being presented. Back in 2015, when the issue of campus antisemitism was discussed at the Regents, Pérez complained that there was always a twinning of the issue with Islamophobia - in contrast with discussion of discrimination against other (non-Jewish) groups. You can hear his remarks back then at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUC071-CikM> beginning at minute 8:42. Perez's remarks this time in the same vein are at the links below:

#### UC Regent Pérez Decries "Bo...



Or direct to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNzqWQC0rX8>.

As always, we preserve Regents meetings since the Regents have no policy with regard to duration of retention of their recordings.

The November 14, 2024 session is at:

<https://archive.org/details/regents-board-am-11-14-2024>.

The morning session is at:

<https://ia800400.us.archive.org/17/items/regents-board-am-11-14-2024/Regents%20Board%20AM%2011-14-2024.mp4>.

The afternoon session (including campus climate) is at:

<https://ia800400.us.archive.org/17/items/regents-board-am-11-14-2024/Regents%20Board%20PM%2011-14-2024.mp4>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:      

Labels: [Drake](#), [UC Regents](#)

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